



Charlotte Mason's House of Education,
Scale How, Ambleside, UK, 2009

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OUR WORK.

House of Education.

INSPECTOR'S REPORT. Christmas, 1904.

Once more it has been my duty and my privilege to pay a quasi-official visit to the House of Education. The aim of the Institution and the sort of guarantee given by the Certificates issued from it are clearly set forth in the prospectus, which is well worthy of perusal. My very pleasant duty has been to see how the object of training candidates, suitably selected to begin with, for the supremely important office of teaching our young folk has been carried out. After the description which I have given in the past two years of the records of my observation, I think that to reiterate my impressions of the value and the character of the work done in the House is unnecessary, and would sound perhaps too much of the "tinsel chink of compliment"; which I am sure would be abhorrent to the mind of the Principal. It may suffice, as regards the general character of the Institution, to say that the same main ideals are kept in view as from the beginning, and are carried out in the same ungrudging spirit of careful superintendence; all animated by lively intelligence and by a gentle and loving spirit. This, however, really implies that while the aim is the same as ever, methods and devices of improvement and advance are also ever sought after. The educational waters are not allowed to become stagnant. The kindly influence that presides, besides being genial, is intellectually alive; ever alert to incorporate into the system whatever may increase interest or promote practical efficiency. Indeed, one thing that I remark with pleasure is the endeavour made by the members of the staff to avoid stereotyped methods, and to enhance the impression created by their lessons through some way of novel presentation of the idea. This year one additional feature has been imported into the curriculum, and it became part of my task accordingly to listen to individual reading aloud by the students. To some persons, this exercise may appear of trivial importance. To my own mind, the contrary appears to be the case. So many things are really required to contribute towards the acquirement of the faculty of good reading; so much lies hidden behind it, that it forms no unworthy test of general culture.

The subject of elocution, as was mentioned last year, has here been specially taken up by Miss Barnett. The passage chosen by Miss Barnett was a very suitable one, taken from Rudyard Kipling's *Five Nations*. It afforded plenty of scope for observing the niceties of good reading; study of exact meaning and similar points needing to be reflected in the tones of the voice, etc., besides the more general pre-requisites in respect of posture, articulation, breathing, and so on, for which much can be done by judicious instruction. Miss Barnett is also to be credited with the varied programme of Sloyd, bookbinding, repoussé work, etc., neatness of finish in which is essential and is found here to the point of wonderment. Nothing is allowed to be scamped under her control; all is good, honest work, done with care and deft manipulation. The Nature Books, which were originally, I fancy, a speciality of the "House" and which are so well-known that I need only mention them, are also done under her care. Most educative they are known to be.

OUR WORK.

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Mdlle. Mottu gave before me a very useful lesson, in the form of a *causerie*, followed by individual reading of French by the students, the subject being the life and influence of Rousseau—one of first-rate importance from an educational point of view, but requiring judicious handling. The lesson was well given, and was varied and made more interesting by suitable illustrations.

Fräulein Diez, with her usual adaptiveness in giving her class some German poetry to learn by heart, contrived, while exercising their minds by bright and lively questioning, to make the exercise an exhilarating one through the employment of rhythmical vocalisation, culminating in a musical round. The passage would assuredly be well remembered as well as understood.

Owing to special circumstances, the lessons of teachers from outside had this year to be abandoned. The students however did not fail, according to time-honoured custom, to enliven my labours by two evening entertainments. One of these belonged to their regular Tuesday evening course. These *causeries de Mardi* must be most helpful in stimulating the desire of general culture, as well as in themselves very enjoyable. On the occasion of my visit, Handel's life was made the subject of an essay by one of the students, the chronological sequence of his principal works being brought out, and illustrations, vocal and instrumental, being supplied by the others with the aid of Miss Barnett. The second entertainment was one of a dramatic character, and exhibited a lively originality on the part of the first year students.

After what has been said in former years, it is scarcely necessary to add that nature-study, comprising various observation, astronomical, botanical, etc., and studies in form and colour, form an integral and highly important part of the training. The drilling of the students into an intelligent insight into the teaching of pianoforte music should not pass without mention.

THE EXAMINATION.

The students of the second year were examined on paper in the History of Education, and in the Theory and the Practice of Teaching, as well as in Reading. They also gave actual lessons before me, notes of three model lessons having been spontaneously prepared by each of them, of which one was selected by me for the occasion. The class-list appended exhibits my opinion of their respective merits.

The papers on History are this year much more equable. They indicate an intelligent and a wide knowledge of the subject, and are highly creditable. Psychology is a difficult and somewhat indefinite subject, but a certain amount of acquaintance with it is an essential part of the equipment of anyone who undertakes the profession of teaching, and the lack of such knowledge has been baneful in past times. Taught, as it is here, under the guidance of the Principal, so as to bring into prominence her well-considered views, it cannot but be of great value to the students. The answers show that her ideas have been thoroughly imbibed. The same remark applies to the answers on the Theory of Method, while, in practice, the lessons given showed the persistent aim to create that which alone can enable the Hill Difficulty to be successfully surmounted—a real positive, inquisitive interest on the part of the pupil.

Miss Mason's genial kindness exercises its usual sway, and in the furtherance of her educational ideas she has the whole-hearted and able assistance of Miss Williams and her Secretary, Miss E. Kitching.

CLASS I.	CLASS II.	CLASS III.
SMITH	{ FLOWER	SAUNDERS
FRANCIS	{ ROTHERA	BLEASE
OWEN	{ CARTER	
	{ DIXON	
	WILKINSON	

C. H. PAREZ,
Vicar of Mentmore;
Formerly one of H.M. Chief Inspectors of Schools.

Report on the Nature Note Books.

After much thought I have determined to put all the nine books into one Class, implying by this that the difference between the first and the last on the list, in quality of work, is only small.

The high character of the work is fully maintained; the notes and excellent drawings bear witness to the fact that they are the result of observation in the field, and not mere memories of the text book and the classroom.

It is quite surprising that all should have attained to such a degree of excellence; that all should be capable of drawing in such a life-like way the various objects seen and noted in the walks; and that all should manifest such an excellent spirit of sympathy and reverence towards living things.

I had the great pleasure of spending the two longest days of last year at the House of Education, and of accompanying the students in their interesting rambles. I no longer wonder at the excellence of the Note Books.

The spontaneous enthusiasm and intelligent curiosity of the students was most stimulating and contagious, and caused me to appreciate more than ever the thoughtful teaching and guidance which had drawn out such fine qualities. It was also a thought full of the greatest comfort to me that these enthusiastic students will in a short time become teachers themselves and will be able to infect with their own spirit the children placed under their care.

CLASS I.	
FLOWER, E.	FRANCIS, G.
SMITH, E. A.	BLEASE, D.
ROTHERA, M.	WILKINSON, M.
OWEN, M.	CARTER, E. J.
DIXON, E.	

REV. A. THORNLEY, M.A., F.L.S.,
Superintendent of Nature Study to the Notts. and Leicester
County Education Committees.
January 20th, 1905.

Report on the Botanical Gardens.

A report from the Gardens was sent to me at the close of the year, containing a complete list of the plants now growing in the several beds. I find that the old specimens are thriving, and that many new have been added. It is evident that the present generation of students inherits and maintains the enthusiasm with which their predecessors began the work four years ago. I hope this summer to visit Ambleside and personally inspect the gardens.

Waltham Rectory, Grimsby,
January 20th, 1905.

W. TUCKWELL.

Result of Examination on Hygiene, held at House of Education, Ambleside,
December 10th, 1904.

PASSED.	
MISS M. H. WISEMAN	MISS J. H. MORRIS
MISS L. STAINTON	MISS G. MAHONY
MISS K. M. CLENDINNEN	MISS J. M. WILKINSON
MISS H. SMEETON	MISS L. A. BELL
MISS K. NELIGAN	MISS L. BEATTY
MISS N. DIXON	

To Ex-students of the House of Education (only).

The Biennial Conference of the Students of the House of Education will be held at Ambleside, between Monday, May 1st, and Saturday, May 6th. By kind permission of Miss Mason, the meetings will be held at the House of Education. It is hoped that all ex-students will make an effort to attend. The programme, as far as arranged, is as follows:—

Monday.—Students assemble.

Tuesday.—(1) Paper on the Teaching of Calisthenics.
(2) Papers on the Teaching of Music.
(3) Paper on the Art of Maintaining Discipline.

Wednesday.—(1) Papers on the Teaching of Mathematics.
(2) Paper on Reading Aloud.
(3) Paper on Character Training.

Thursday.—Criticism Lessons by present Students.

Friday.—(1) Lesson on Teaching Design to the old Students.
(2) Paper on Design for use in Handicrafts and Needlework.
(3) Criticism Lesson by an Ex-student.

Saturday.—Morning:

Afternoon: Garden Party at Scale How (by invitation).

Afternoons.—Geography and Bird Walks have been kindly promised by members of the Staff. Excursions.

The Report of the Examiner of the Christmas Examination of the Parents' Review School is held over till next month for want of space.

*Register of Schools, some classes of which work in the Parents' Review School and are tested by P.R.S. Examiner:—

Principal.	School.	Girls or Boys.	Classes Working in P.R.S.
MISS AITCHISON	Abbeyfield House, Sheffield	Girls	After Easter.
MISS BECK	Fridhem, Heacham, King's Lynn	Girls	Ia., Ib. and III.
MISS COOKE	"Romanoff," Surbiton	Girls	I., II., III., IV.
MISS CRAMPTON	Frenchay Lodge, nr. Bristol	Girls	II. and III.
W. STORRS FOX, Esq.	St. Anselm's, Bakewell	Boys	II. and III.

* The Committee take no responsibility with regard to these schools except as far as the above statement goes; due inquiries should be made by parents. Prospectuses can be had on application to the Office.

Principal.	School.	Girls or Boys.	Classes Working P.R.S.
MISS GAYFORD	S. Cuthbert's, Twickenham	Girls and small boys	Ia. and II.
C. H. GIBBS, ESQ.	37, Sloane Street, London, S.W.	Boys (preparatory)	Ib. and II.
MISS FIELD HALL	High Cliff School, Scarborough	Girls	II.
MRS. LAMB	Rijswijk, Epsom	Girls and boys	Ia. and II.
MISS LEVICK	Edgehill, Peak Hill, Sydenham, S.E.	Girls	Ia., Ib., II. & III.
MISS MAUD	Uplands House, Swansea	Girls	Ib., II., III., IV.
MISS NESBIT	S. Hilda's Prep. School, Purley	Girls and boys	Ia., Ib. & II.
J. W. E. PEARCE, ESQ.	Merton Court School, Sidcup	Boys	Ia. and Ib.
MISS RICHARDSON	Lindum House, Bexhill-on-Sea	Girls	II. and III.
J. O. M. THOMAS, ESQ.	14, Chilworth Street, Westbourne Terrace, W.	Boys	Ia., Ib., II. & III.
H. G. UNDERHILL, ESQ.	Wootton Court, Wootton, near Canterbury	Boys (preparatory)	Ia., Ib., II. and III.

P.N.E.U. Literary Society.—Subject for March: *The Promise of May* (Lord Tennyson).

P.N.E.U. Translation Society.—Subject for March: From *Die Versunkene Glocke* von Gerhart Hauptmann.

The Hon. Sec. ventures to remind the members of both the societies that the subscriptions (1/6 each) are to be paid this month to Miss Armfield, P.N.E.U. Central Office, 26, Victoria Street, London, S.W.

C. AGNES ROOPER, *Hon. Sec.*,

Pen Selwood, Gervis Road, Bournemouth,

From whom all particulars may be obtained.

BOOKS.

A Boy's Control and Self-Expression, by Eustace Miles (10/-). Everyone who labours for the better up-bringing of the young merits our sympathy, and no doubt the author of this volume will produce results. We suspect, however, that these will be like the rapid growth of the seed that had no depth of earth. All thoughtful people are agreed upon the duty of temperate eating for boys as well as for others; but very slow mastication is followed by certain physical ills; and the pursuit of very easily digested food is a mistake we are all inclined to make. The novice engaged in forming a plantation would secure that every sapling should have plenty of growing room; but experience says, plant three times as many trees as can grow in the space; and the reason is instructive; it is to afford the young trees that struggle for existence which is the condition of strength. Now, the digestive powers, which are deprived of the labour and struggle proper to every part of us, decline in power and energy and become the less able to assimilate even that which is supplied

to them. Of course, to plant six times as many saplings as can grow in the space would be fatal in another direction because, in planting as in eating, we must find and follow the golden mean. Eat that which is set before you, said Christ. Eat that which is set before you, said Socrates. Eat that which is set before you asking no questions for conscience' sake, said S. Paul; and these several sayings are illuminated by another saying of our Lord's, "Take no thought for the life, what ye shall eat"; that is, perhaps, "follow in moderation the common practice." Excessive concern as to what we shall eat and what we shall wear in order to secure the best physical conditions, is, doubtless, a sign of decadence. But we have another contention with the author of this well-meant volume. Every act of mastication, the use of cold water, exercise and games, the very act of breathing, all are to be deliberately directed towards the one purpose of keeping the body in chastity. Surely here is a case of—

"All seems infected that the infected spy
As all looks yellow to the jaundiced eye,"

and perhaps there is no means of securing a universal unchastity so effectual as that of surrounding young people with an atmosphere charged, so to speak, with the subject; for we all know what the people about us are thinking of and young people are even more *aware* than their elders. We have sure means in our hands. Our appeal is to the loyalty of obedience, "Thou shalt not"; to the heroic impulse, "Glorify God in your bodies"; and to a mind, heart, and life, full of noble interests.

Ambidexterity, by John Jackson (Kegan Paul). Mr. Jackson has produced a singularly fair-minded and careful volume on a subject on which he has a good right to speak, he being the founder of the *Ambidextral Culture Society*; and when one regards the size of the volume, which is unusually free from padding, we are inclined to cry aloud, "Eureka! here at last is EDUCATION!" A preface from Major Baden-Powell, that high authority upon "Scouting" among other things, should confirm this impression. But we are reminded of the farmer who made a raid upon the birds that made free with his seed-corn and found himself thereafter the victim of many "pesky plagues." Why? He had disturbed the equilibrium of nature. In like manner, if we succeed in becoming an ambidextrous nation, we shall probably become also a nation slow of speech and dull of wits, because that left lobe of the brain which is concerned with right hand action is also concerned with the origination of speech, which, again, is so intimately inter-related with thought that no man can say where the one begins and the other ends. Therefore, in training our children to be ambidextrous because, being each a law unto ourselves, we propose to make them "handy" with both hands, we are like the farmer who shoots the birds. We disturb the natural equilibrium, a hazardous experiment, whether in the individual, or the universal frame of things.

Golden Treasury of Songs and Lyrics, by Francis Palgrave (Macmillan, 1/-). It is good to see this most popular and precious of all anthologies in a cheaper edition. For ourselves, though, we prefer the fair page and pleasing type of the old blue volume.